



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE APPREHENDS 44 MINNESOTA GANG MEMBERS, ASSOCIATES AS PART OF OPERATION COMMUNITY SHIELD

30 gang members have already been deported

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention and removal officers have deported 30 of the 44 gang members and associates apprehended by ICE special agents in Minnesota since Operation Community Shield was launched in February.

Operation Community Shield is an ongoing national ICE anti-gang initiative designed to disrupt, dismantle, and prosecute street gang members and their organizations. From the operation's beginning through the end of October, ICE has arrested more than 1,500 gang members and associates nationwide.

The most recent Minnesota gang members deported include:

- Gerardo Rios-Lopez, 25, of Mexico. Rios-Lopez was convicted in Hennepin County District Court in June 1997 of second-degree murder, and of committing the murder for the benefit of a gang. He was sentenced to 144 months in prison for the murder and to an additional year because it was for the benefit of a gang. Rios-Lopez is a member of the Latin Kings. He was deported to Mexico Oct. 26.
- Argenis Manuel Bernabe-Orosco, 21, of Mexico. Bernabe-Orosco, a leader of the Latin Kings gang in the Chaska, Minn. area, was convicted of helping a fellow gang member avoid arrest by hiding guns stolen from a Chaska home. He was sentenced Oct. 20 in Carver County District Court to 365 days in prison. Bernabe-Orosco was deported to Mexico yesterday.
- Gilberto Rodriguez-Hernandez, 34, of Mexico. Rodriguez-Hernandez, a member of the 13th Avenue Gang based in Los Angeles, pleaded guilty to first-degree aggravated robbery and giving false information to police in Ramsey County District Court in August 2003. He was sentenced to 44 months in prison. Rodriguez-Hernandez was deported to Mexico Oct. 26.



Among the crimes committed by other gang members and associates apprehended by ICE in Minnesota are: assault on a federal officer, obstructing justice, gang-related stabbing, sale of cocaine, criminal sexual conduct and accomplice after the fact (for a gang-related carjacking). Two of those arrested are currently being criminally prosecuted for illegally re-entering the U.S. after being previously deported.

Those arrested in Minnesota are members and associates of the following gangs: MS-13, Sureños (SUR-13), Latin Locos, Latin Kings, Vatos Locos, Logan Heights Gang and Insane National Vikings.

“These arrests and deportations send a clear message to street gang members that stopping their criminal activity is a high priority with ICE,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Mark Cangemi of the ICE office in Bloomington. “We will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to break the cycles of gang-related violence that threaten the safety and stability of our communities.”

Under Operation Community Shield, ICE is employing its broad immigration authorities (both criminal and administrative immigration authorities) against foreign-born gang members. ICE is also employing its broad customs authorities to combat drug trafficking and other crimes committed by these gangs.

The MS-13 street gang was the initial target of Operation Community Shield. MS-13 is the largest and most violent street gang in the country. In May, ICE expanded Operation Community Shield to include all criminal street gangs with foreign-born members. With the launch of this second phase, ICE’s Operation Community Shield aims to ensure that gang members have no safe haven in our nation’s communities.

NOTE: For JPEG digital image files of the men pictured in this release, please contact Tim Counts at 952-853-2602 or via e-mail at Tim.Counts@dhs.gov.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.